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# CHOLERA MORBUS;

ITS FIRST SYMPTOMS CLEARLY POINTED OUT,

AND

ITS DANGEROUS EFFECTS

FULLY PREVENTED.

WRITTEN WITH THE VIEW

TO AFFORD IMMEDIATE RELIEF AND ULTIMATE CURE

TO THOSE AFFLICTED WITH THIS DREADFUL MALADY; BY THE ADOPTION  
OF CERTAIN REMEDIES HERE RECOMMENDED:

TOGETHER WITH

DR. SYDENHAM'S ACCOUNT OF THE CHOLERA MORBUS, WHICH  
RAGED IN ENGLAND, IN THE YEAR 1669.

BY JAMES RYMER,

MEMBER OF THE ROYAL COLLEGE OF SURGEONS.

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*Non mihi sed rationale, vel quæ ratio esse videtur  
Milito; securus quid mordicus hic tenet, aut hic.*

SCALIGER.

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THIRD EDITION.

LONDON:

PRINTED FOR EFFINGHAM WILSON,  
ROYAL EXCHANGE.  
1831.

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*Price Sixpence.*



OF THE  
**CHOLERA MORBUS.**

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(**CHOLERA**, from  $\chi\omega\lambda\eta$ , Bile, and  $\rho\epsilon\omega$ , to flow.)

A Disease that consists in a purging and vomiting of Bile.

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**CONTAGION.**

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**1. Of Epidemical Contagion.**

THAT such a disposition or texture happens to the mass of the Air as occasions various diseases at different times, is manifest to any one who considers that one and the same disease destroys an infinite number of persons at some certain seasons, and at another time seizes one only here and there; but what that state or disposition of the Air is, we know not: it remains a secret in nature with which perhaps we shall never be acquainted.

**2. Of Pestilential Contagion.**

In contagious diseases called **PESTILENTIAL**, besides the constitution of the Air as a more common cause, Infection may be received by contact; or, it may be transmitted by *Fomes* or merchandize from

one distant part to another : and should this happen while there is such a disposition of the Air, a dreadful fire would presently be kindled by a small spark, and the whole Air through that tract of earth would suddenly be infected with the PESTILENTIAL CONTAGION.

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### SECTION I.

In this disease, a vomiting and purging concurring together, or frequently alternating with one another, are the chief symptoms. The matter rejected both upwards and downwards appears manifestly to consist chiefly of Bile.

From this last circumstance I conclude, that the disease depends upon an increased secretion of bile, and its copious effusion into the alimentary canal ; and, as in this, it irritates and excites the motions above mentioned, I infer, that the bile thus effused in larger quantity is at the same time also of a more acrid quality. This appears likewise from the violent and very painful gripings that attend the disease, and which we can impute only to the violent spasmodic contractions of the intestines that take place here. These spasms are commonly communicated to the abdominal muscles, and very frequently to those of the extremities.

In the manner now described, the disease frequently proceeds with great violence, till the strength of the patient is greatly, and often suddenly, weakened ; while, from a coldness of the extremities, cold sweats, and faintings coming on, an end is put to the patient's life ; sometimes in the course of one day. In other cases the disease is less violent, continues for a day or two, and then ceases by degrees ; though such recoveries seldom happen without the assistance of remedies.

The attacks of this disease are seldom accompanied with any symptoms of Fever, and though, during the course of it, both the pulse and respiration are hurried and irregular, yet these symptoms are generally so quickly removed by those remedies which quiet the spasmodic affections peculiar to the disease, as to leave no ground for supposing that it had been accompanied by any proper pyrexia or fever.

Cholera Morbus is a disease attending a very warm state of the air, and, in very warm climates, it may perhaps appear at any time of the year ; but even in such climates it is most frequent during their warmest seasons ; and, in temperate climates, it appears only in the warm seasons. Dr. Sydenham considered the appearances of this disease in England to be confined to the month of August ;

but he himself observed it to appear sometimes towards the end of summer, when the season was unusually warm, and that in proportion to the heat, the violence of the disease was greater. Others have observed that it appeared more early in summer, and always sooner or later, in proportion as the great heats set in.

From all these circumstances, it is very evident, that this disease is the effect of a warm atmosphere, producing some change in the state of the bile in the human body ; and the change may consist either in the matter of the bile being rendered more acrid, and thereby fitted to excite a more copious secretion ; or, in the same matter being prepared to pass off in larger quantity than usual.

It has been remarked, that in warm climates and seasons, after extremely hot and dry weather, a fall of rain, cooling the atmosphere, seems especially to bring on this disease ; and it is very probable that an obstructed perspiration may have also a share in this, though it is also certain that the disease does appear when no change in the temperature of the air, nor any application of cold have been observed.

It is possible that, in some cases, the heat of the season may give only a predisposition, and that the disease may be excited by certain ingesta or other

causes; but it is equally certain that the disease has occurred without any previous change or error, either in diet, or in the manner of life that could be observed.

Nosologists have constituted a genus under the title of Cholera, and under this title have arranged as species, every affection in which a vomiting and purging of any kind happened to occur. In many of these species, however, the matter evacuated is not bilious, nor does the evacuation proceed from any cause in the state of the atmosphere. Further, in many of these species also, the vomiting which occurs is not an essential, but merely an accidental symptom from the particular violence of the disease. The appellation of Cholera, therefore, should, in my opinion, be confined to the disease I have described: which by its peculiar cause, and also by its symptoms, is very different from all the other species that have been associated with it. All the other species arranged under the title of Cholera by Sauvages or Sagar, may be properly enough referred to the genus of Diarrhœa.

The distinction I have endeavoured to establish between the proper Cholera, and the other diseases that have sometimes the same appellation, will, as I judge, supersede the question; Whether the Cho-

lera, in temperate climates, happens at any other season than that above assigned ?

In the case of a genuine Cholera, the cure of it has been long established by experience.

In the beginning of the disease, the evacuation of the redundant bile is to be favoured by the plentiful exhibition of mild diluents, both given by the mouth and injected by clysters ; and all evacuant medicines, employed in either way, are not only *superfluous*, but commonly *hurtful*.

When the redundant bile appears to be sufficiently washed out, and even before that, if the spasmotic affections of the alimentary canal become very violent, and are communicated in a considerable degree to other parts of the body, or when a dangerous debility seems to be induced, the irritation is to be immediately obviated by *Opiates*, in sufficiently large doses, but in small bulk, and given either by the mouth or by clyster.

Though the patient be in this manner relieved, it frequently happens, that when the operation of the opium is over, the disease shows a tendency to return ; and, for at least some days after the first attack, the irritability of the intestines, and their disposition to

fall into painful spasmodic contractions, seem to continue. In this situation, the repetition of the Opiates, for perhaps several days, may be necessary ; and as the debility, commonly induced by the disease, favours the disposition to spasmodic affections, it is often useful and necessary, together with the Opiates, to employ the tonic powers of the Peruvian Bark.\*

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## SECTION II.

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### SPECIES.

1. *Cholera spontanea* :—occurring in warm weather without any manifest cause.
2. *Cholera accidentalis* :—from acrid matter in the Stomach and Intestines.

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### SYMPTOMS.

Nausea, pain, and distention of the stomach and intestines ; quickly succeeded by a violent and frequent vomiting and purging of bilious matter ; frequent, small, sometimes unequal pulse ;—much thirst and heat, followed by cold sweats ;—great anxiety, spasmodic contractions of the extremities, and some-

\* Vide Treatise on “ Diet and Regimen.” Sold by the same Publisher. Price 7s., Boards.

times universal convulsions;—hiccup, and not unfrequently death, within the space of twenty-four hours.

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#### CAUSES.

Excessive heat, or sudden transitions from heat to cold; hence more frequent in autumn, from an exposure to cold evenings after very hot days;—food of difficult digestion;—rancid butter;—the colder fruits, such as cucumber, melon, &c.;—active and violent purgatives;—poisons;—violent passions of the mind;—marsh miasma.

*Proximate.*—Inordinate secretion of bile of a vitiated quality.

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#### PROGNOSIS.

*Favourable.*—A gradual diminution of the symptoms; especially vomiting, succeeded by sleep, or a gentle moisture on the skin.—The disease, when protracted to the fifth, sixth, or seventh day, seldom proves fatal.

*Unfavourable.*—Spasm of the extremities;—convulsions;—great prostration of strength;—cold, clammy sweats;—anxiety;—short, hurried respira-

tion ;—continual hiccup ;—intermitting pulse ; fœtid vomiting ;—great distention of the abdomen.

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## TREATMENT.

*Indications.*—I. To allay the inordinate commotion of the stomach and intestines, by correcting the acrimony of the secreted bile, and by diminishing their irritability.

II. To restore the tone of the primæ viæ.

The first indication requires :

1st. Copious tepid diluents of weak chicken broth, decoction of barley, &c.

2nd. Emollient clysters of starch, marsh-mallows, linseed.

3d. Opium\* in large doses, both by the mouth, and in the form of *Enema*†, or applied externally‡, by friction, to the abdomen.

\* Vide “ Treatise on Diet and Regimen,” page 122, line 19.

† Ditto, page 74.

‡ Ditto, page 78.

4th. Warm plasters, and fomentations of poppies, with the addition of camphorated spirit;—the saline \* draught in the act of effervescence.

The tone of the primæ viæ is to be restored—  
By the use of the stomachic tonics, and other bitter remedies recommended for the cure of dyspepsia or indigestion; beginning with the lighter preparations.

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#### EXTRACT FROM

#### SYDENHAM'S PRACTICE OF PHYSIC,

*Published Anno 1712.*

Chap. 2, page 114. “Of the CHOLERA MORBUS of the Year 1669.”

“ This disease was more epidemical† in the year 1669, than I ever knew it in any other year. The disease is easily known, for there are violent vomitings, and evacuations of ill humours by stool; there is a violent pain in the stomach and bowels; thirst;—a quick pulse, with heat and anxiety;—

\* Vide Treatise “on Diet and Regimen,” page 145.

† Epidemic (*Epidemicus*; from *ἐπι*, upon, and *ἡμος*, the people). A contagious disease is so termed from its attacking many people at the same season, and at the same place.

“ and often a small and unequal pulse ; great nausea,  
“ and sometimes colliquative sweats ;—contractions  
“ of the arms and legs ;—fainting ;—a coldness of  
“ the extremities, and such like symptoms, which  
“ frighten the by-standers, and kill the patient in  
“ twenty-four hours.

“ I have found by much consideration, and by  
“ manifold experience, that if on the one hand I  
“ should endeavour to expel these sharp humours,  
“ that are the fuel of the disease, by *Cathartics*, I  
“ should do just as he that endeavours to quench  
“ fire with oil, seeing the operation of the most  
“ gentle purge would but cause further disturbance,  
“ and raise new tumults ; and on the other hand,  
“ should I restrain the first effort with narcotic me-  
“ dicines and astringents, whilst I hindered natural  
“ evacuations, and detained the humour, the patient  
“ would undoubtedly be destroyed by an intestine  
“ war, his enemy being kept in his bowels. For  
“ these reasons, therefore, I thought I must go in  
“ the middle way, that I might partly evacuate and  
“ partly dilute the humour. I found out this me-  
“ thod several years ago, and have long experienced  
“ it, and have by it many times reduced this disease  
“ to good order.

“ Boil a chicken in about three gallons of spring  
“ water, so that the liquor has scarce any relish of

“ the chick; order the patient to drink several large draughts of this a little warm, or, for want of it, posset-drink; at the same time a good quantity of it will serve for several clysters, to be given successively, until all the broth is consumed, and evacuated upwards and downwards; so the stomach being often loaded with a considerable quantity of the liquor, and the injection of clysters being repeated, the sharp humours are either cast out, or their acrimony being taken off, they are reduced to a due temper, the filth being ejected by these means, which require three or four hours. Some anodyne medicine perfects the cure; I use the following:

“ Take of liquid Laudanum,                            thirty drops.  
“ Wine,    a table-spoonful.  
“ Mix them.

“ This way of diluting the humours is much safer and quicker than that which is commonly taken to stop this dangerous disease, viz. either by things that evacuate or bind, because the tumult is made worse by purges; and the other, on the contrary, keeps the enemy in the bowels.

“ But it must be carefully noted, that if the physician is not called till the vomiting and looseness have continued many hours, suppose ten or twelve,

“ and the patient is worn out, so that the extremities  
“ wax cold; I say *in this case*, all other remedies  
“ being omitted, he must immediately fly to *Lauda-*  
“ *num*, the *Sacred Anchor* in this disease, which  
“ must not only be given when the symptoms are  
“ urgent, but also after the vomiting and looseness  
“ go off, and it must be repeated morning and  
“ evening daily, (gradually diminishing the dose,)  
“ till the patient has recovered his strength and  
“ health.”

F I N I S.

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*Just published, price 7s. Boards,*

A Treatise on DIET AND REGIMEN, wherein are established, on practical grounds, RULES, for the Prevention and Cure of Diseases incident to a disordered state of the Digestive Organs, and of the Nervous System. To which are added, a Posological Table, or Medicine Chest Directory:—a table intended to show the doses of medicines proper for persons of different ages:—select Prescriptions and a Glossary, or Explanation of Terms. By JAMES RYMER, Member of the Royal College of Surgeons in London. Published by Effingham Wilson, Royal Exchange.

## The King.

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The following instance of His Most Gracious Majesty's great condescension, deserves to be recorded:

From Sir Herbert Taylor, Bart. to James Rymer,  
Surgeon.

" Windsor Castle, July 29th, 1831.

" Sir,

" I have had the honor to receive  
" and to submit to the King your Paper on the  
" Cholera Morbus, which you enclosed to me on the  
" 23d Instant, and which was graciously received  
" by His Majesty.

" I am much obliged to you for the Copy enclosed  
" for myself.

" I have the Honor to be,

" Sir,

" Your most obedient Servant,

" H. TAYLOR."







